

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS



**SAFE**  
*Safe Alliances for Everyone*

**ANTI-VIOLENCE STRATEGY**  
**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

MARCH 2015



GRAPHIC DESIGN BY  
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E - EFFECT POSITIVE CHANGE IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS [LOCAL, COUNTY, AND STATE]

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## MESSAGE FROM MAYOR HEARTWELL

Dear reader:

Behind this page you will find a set of recommendations that, when fully implemented, will revolutionize crime prevention in Grand Rapids, fundamentally altering the means we use to address violence in our city.

In May 2014, aware of escalating violence in some of our neighborhoods - violence resulting from petty street crime and frequently involving the use of illegally-owned firearms - I empanelled a group of citizens to address this critical issue. Under the leadership of Commissioner Senita Leneer, a taskforce that included Commissioner Walt Gutowski, Commissioner Ruth Kelly, and citizen members listed within, wrestled with the big questions, researched national trends and innovative solutions from other cities, and then particularized the study based on Grand Rapids' data. I want to express my deep appreciation for all who answered the call and worked hard over the course of 10 months to deliver this document.



While Category I crime statistics are at historical lows in Grand Rapids, this is, arguably, the best time to implement creative new approaches to reducing violence. We are not in crisis; and we have the time to think creatively and try approaches we haven't used before.

Also, we know that addressing violence is not simply a matter of increased or improved law enforcement; that is, violence reduction is not solely the responsibility of the Grand Rapids Police Department. In fact, crime prevention - addressing the root causes of violence before they fester and result in criminal activity - is the responsibility of the ENTIRE community. Our non-profit organizations, public health institutions, K-12 and higher education institutions and faith communities have the responsibility and the resources to best address the problem of violence. Working with local government and law enforcement, they will implement the recommendations of this report and we will all enjoy the benefits of this collaborative initiative.

I pledge to you my full support for this effort. This support includes appointing a citizen oversight committee to guide the effort, as well as budgeting adequate financial resources to implement recommendations of the report.

We stand on the edge of a bright tomorrow. The goal of reducing street violence in our city is eminently achievable. Together we will create SAFE neighborhoods for Grand Rapids.

In Hope and Confidence,

George K. Heartwell

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

March 2015

For the past eleven months, the Safe Alliances For Everyone (SAFE) Taskforce met to investigate root causes to the issue of violence in our neighborhoods and to develop recommendations to move Grand Rapids towards PEACE. This multi-sector, multigenerational collaborative has engaged in an exhaustive study of national best practices, local data, and community listening sessions, to uncover the risk factors, protective factors, and missing factors contributing to the challenges of violence impacting our city, especially young adults between the ages of 15-24.

We have developed a synthesized snapshot of the research methods employed by the taskforce and provided 5 PEACE pillar recommendations:

- P - Prevention Investment
- E - Eliminate Violent Acts
- A - Activate Economic Opportunity
- C - Community Engagement, Education, and Empowerment
- E - Effect Positive Change in Public Institutions [Local, County, and State]



While the vision for SAFE was conceived by municipality leadership, the work of SAFE is the direct result of the collective wisdom, personal investment, and shared passion of resident leaders eager to do the heavy lifting required to spark social change.

### *Special thanks to:*

**SAFE Taskforce members** - Thank you for being insistent that we remove silos, ask difficult questions and confront systemic issues using qualitative and quantitative data to guide us. Thank you for applying a lens of asset mapping to understanding the need and issues facing our youth and for being relentless in lending your best selves to laying the foundation for change.

**SAFE Supporters and Contributors** - Thank you for the timely sharing of your expertise at different phases within this journey. Your voice and vantage point have been priceless to the development of SAFE. Finally, I would like to give a special thank you to John Walsh, Ph.D., Patrick Gerkin Ph.D. and Lynn Heemstra for their time and effort in compiling and synthesizing the content of this report.

**Every citizen and reader of this report** - It is our hope that you will be inspired to act and join the next phase of community mobilization in the quest to actualize and implement the principles of SAFE. If SAFE simply becomes a catchy mantra, our work will be in vain. We need you to ensure that SAFE ignites a paradigm shift supported by every sector and citizen that calls Grand Rapids home. This is our city, our problem, and our collective hands and voices are needed to enact and achieve PEACE.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Senita Lenear".

Senita Lenear,  
Third Ward City Commissioner  
City of Grand Rapids



# INTRODUCTION

Beginning in May, 2014 Mayor George Heartwell called for a taskforce to address the issues of violence, particularly gun violence in neighborhoods. The taskforce was charged with making recommendations to the City Commission regarding prevention strategies regarding neighborhood violence within the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Mayor Heartwell appointed Third-Ward City Commissioner Senita Lenear as Chair of the taskforce. The taskforce was composed of persons with specific knowledge and experience regarding the issues of violence within the Grand Rapids community.

**TABLE INTRO.1: TASKFORCE MEMBERS**

MEMBER	ORGANIZATION
SENITA LENEAR (CHAIR)	GRAND RAPIDS CITY COMMISSIONER
RUTH KELLY	
WALT GUTOWSKI	
MARIAN BERRERA-YOUNG	BAXTER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
SERGEANT GEOFF COLLARD	GRAND RAPIDS POLICE DEPARTMENT
SCOTT GILMAN, MSA, CBHE	NETWORK 180
ALYSA GREGORY	INTERN (TARGET AGE GROUP REPRESENTATIVE)
ANDY GUY	STATE OF MICHIGAN OFFICE OF URBAN INITIATIVES
LYNN HEEMSTRA	OUR COMMUNITY'S CHILDREN
LARRY JOHNSON	GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WILLIE PATTERSON	LINC/STOP IT!
JULIE RIDENOUR	STEELECASE FOUNDATION
RAYNARD ROSS	GRCC/GRPS/CURE VIOLENCE RESEARCHER
LINDSEY RUFFIN	EASTOWN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
CHRIS SAIN	GRAND CITY/GRCC
JOHN WALSH, PH.D.	GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
MILINDI YSASI-CASTANON	SPECTRUM HEALTH/HISPANIC CENTER

This report was prepared on behalf of the SAFE (Safe Alliances for Everyone) Taskforce for the City of Grand Rapids. In addition to the collaboration and time provided by SAFE Taskforce members we would like to thank the numerous community members who volunteered their expertise, time and service during the analysis and preparation of this report. Included among these individuals are Jerry Bishop, Dick Bulkowski, Dr. Lennox Forrest, Ryan Gimarc, Quentin Henry, Jonathan Jelks, Joe Jones, Elijah Libett, Lawrence "Duke" Turley, and numerous other neighborhood residents who offered insight during the past nine months.

In addition, we would like to thank Grand Rapids Police Department members, Chief David Rahinsky, Lieutenant David Schnurstein, Crime Analyst Andre McLain, Officer Pete McWalters and the numerous Grand Rapids community police officers who added objective data and insights which shaped this report.

Included and invited to taskforce service were individuals involved in neighborhood associations, non-profit organizations, mental health professionals, faith-based organizations and leaders, individuals within higher education and police personnel. The taskforce met 12 times between June, 2014 and February 2015. The initial meetings focused on introductions, individual backgrounds and areas of expertise revolving around violence issues. The SAFE Taskforce identified-group- of-need is individuals between the ages of 15-24 years old.

The SAFE (Safe Alliances For Everyone) Taskforce established four goals:

- 1) Align and share information on what exists regarding neighborhood violence
- 2) Support programs based on valid research to fill existing gaps
- 3) Advocate for community empowerment and voice
- 4) Promote city policy through recommendation

The SAFE Taskforce agreed upon guidelines for achieving the aforementioned goals including reviewing past reports and activities produced at the local and national level, invited speakers and guests from local and state agencies, continued consideration of “best practices” programs at the public, parochial and private levels of community investment, discussion of existing programs and program gaps within the city of Grand Rapids, the inclusion of alternative community voices and perspectives at the neighborhood level, and a review of Calls for Police Service Data (CFS) across the City of Grand Rapids. Through consideration of these different data points the SAFE Taskforce will promote city policy recommendations to city officials.

### ***Structure of the Report***

The SAFE Taskforce report consists of four sections. First, a review of taskforce meetings between June 2014 and February 2015 will provide the reader with an overview of local and national level violence reduction programs and data that served to form the policy recommendations located within section four. The second section consists of a discussion of community conversations conducted by the SAFE Taskforce and alternative community voices in the Eastown and Baxter neighborhoods of Grand Rapids. Individuals representing specific sub-groups of community members within these neighborhoods were invited to join with the taskforce and discuss their concerns regarding violence and violence reduction at the neighborhood level. The third section consists of a discussion of Police Calls for Service (CFS) data from the years 2013 and 2014 provided by the Grand Rapids Police Department (GRPD) data analysis team. The fourth and final section will consist of the SAFE Taskforce policy recommendations and conclusion.



**Section 1: SAFE TASKFORCE MEETINGS, TOPICS, AND DISCUSSIONS**

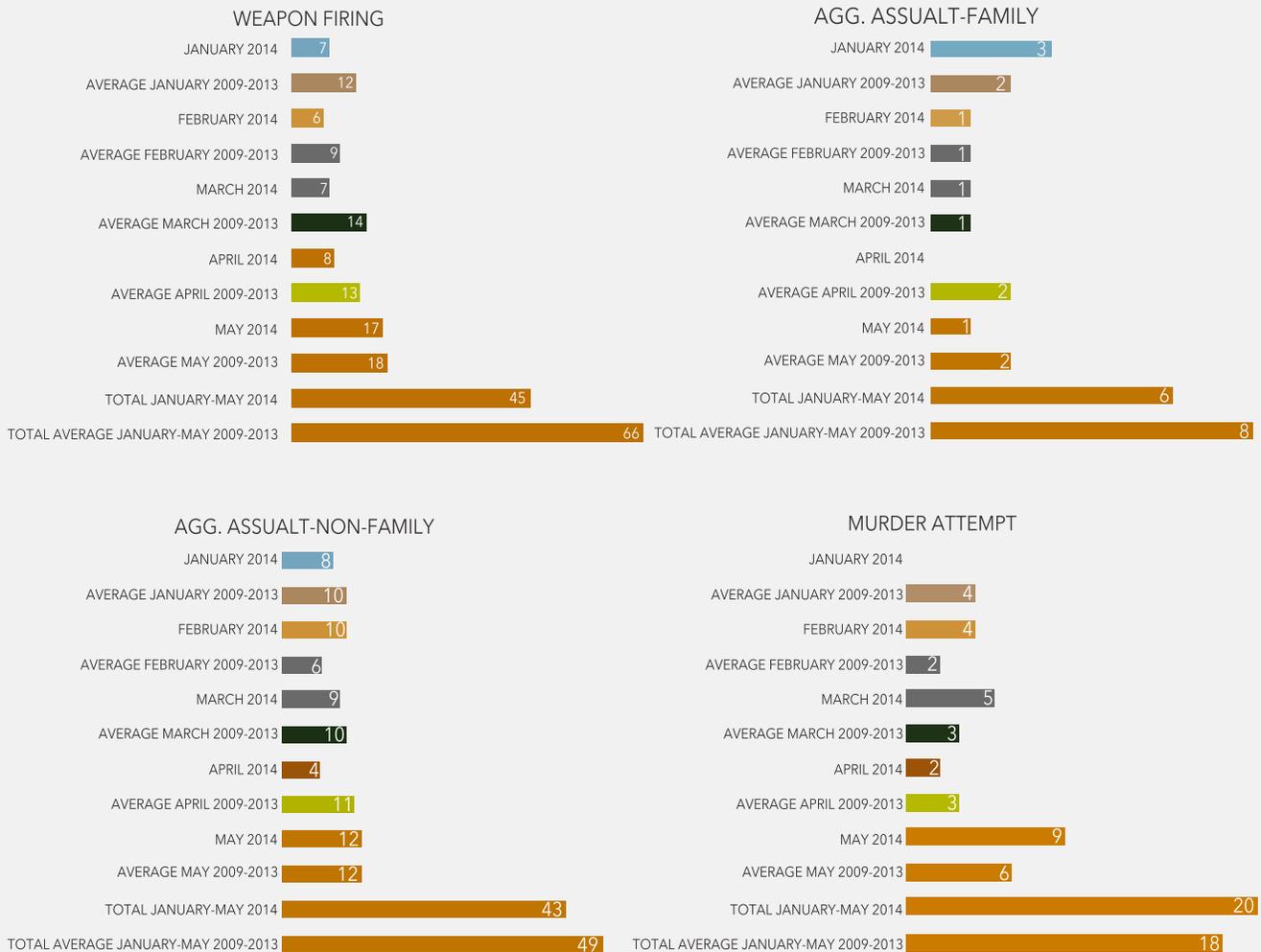
**LOCAL DATA AND LOCAL INITIATIVES**

**Grand Rapids Police Department Firearm Related Offenses**

In June 2014, the Grand Rapids Police Department (GRPD) presented Michigan Incident Crime Reporting (MICR) data related to firearm related offenses for the year 2014 between the months of January and May compared to the five year average (2009-2013) of these reported offenses during the same months. The categories of presentation include:

- 1) Aggravated Assault (victim shot at but not hit) by a family member with a gun
- 2) Aggravated Assault (victim shot at but not hit) by a non-family member with a gun
- 3) Murder Attempt (victim struck by gun fire but survives)
- 4) Weapon Firing (no victim shot at but evidence of shots fired found; i.e. shell casings, holes etc.)

**TABLE 1.1 JANUARY-MAY, 2014 FIREARM RELATED OFFENSES 2014 VS. FIVE YEAR AVERAGE (2009-2013)**

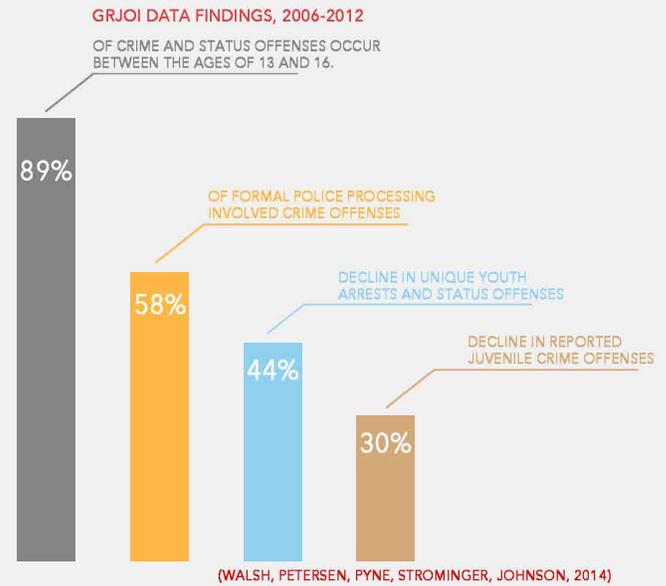


**MICR DATA PROVIDED BY THE GRAND RAPIDS POLICE DEPARTMENT**

The results listed in the table 1.1 reveal a total of 114 offenses across these categories occurring in the first five months of 2014. Comparatively, 141 offenses across these categories was the average between 2009 and 2013. The 2014 decrease reflects a 32% decline in the number of weapon firing cases recorded through the MICR between January and May, 2014.

### GRAND RAPIDS JUVENILE OFFENSE INDEX (GRJOI), 2014

The Grand Rapids Juvenile Offense Index (GRJOI) data results were presented to the taskforce by two S.A.F.E. committee members who were instrumental in the development of the seven year trend analysis of juvenile offenses and incidents in Grand Rapids. The GRJOI was produced in 2014 on behalf of Our Community's Children and the Grand Rapids Police Department by the Johnson Center for Philanthropy and the Community Research Institute at Grand Valley State University. Highlights of the GRJOI included a 44 percent decline in unique youth arrests and status offenses within Grand Rapids and more than a 30 percent decline in reported juvenile crime offenses within Grand Rapids between 2006 and 2012. In addition, over 89 percent of crime and status offenses occur between the ages of 13 and 16 and juvenile offense/incidents occur most often right after school between two and four p.m. and between seven and nine p.m. The most common offenses recorded for juveniles were disorderly conduct, assault, and retail theft (in their respective order), with just under half (48.65%) committed and recorded by GRPD during this time period in these categories.



### STOP IT! COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INITIATIVE, 2013

The SAFE Taskforce discussed at length the findings of the STOP IT! Community Violence Initiative report (2013) produced by the Johnson Center for Philanthropy and the Community Research Institute at Grand Valley State University. The 2013 meetings consisted of eight community dialogues emanating

#### STOP IT! DIALOGUE QUESTIONS:

- WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY?
- WHAT IS TRIGGERING VIOLENCE?
- HOW DOES THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE COMPARE TO OTHER YEARS?
- WHAT SOLUTIONS HAVE YOU TRIED OR WOULD LIKE TO TRY?
- IF YOU COULD DO ONE THING ABOUT THE ISSUE WHEN YOU LEAVE TODAY, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

(DELANEY, JOHNSON, AND MURPHY, 2013)

from an initial city-wide meeting of more than 1,000 community members concerned about violent crime in the city of Grand Rapids. The subsequent community dialogues resulted from five questions posed to attending community members. Facilitation of the dialogues was orchestrated by Grand Rapids clergy and community leaders. Community participation across the eight dialogues ranged from 20 to 300 participants. Captured results from the dialogue questions revolved around the emotional impacts of community violence; socio-structural needs not being met in the community; the perpetuation of race and class stereotypes; discrimination; weapon availability and generational change in the acceptance of violence. Suggestions for positive change included enhancing relationships; increased parental involvement; increasing youth opportunities; increasing economic opportunities; improving education; limiting gun possession; and increasing access to existing resources.

## *IN-SCHOOL AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING INITIATIVES*

SAFE Taskforce members discussed at length the potential that in-school and after-school programs have for crime prevention. Included within these discussions was an assessment of promising initiatives that currently exist within Grand Rapids Public Schools and within the greater community. In recent years GRPS has been challenged by a disproportionate amount of minority student expulsions.

Expelled students are more likely to come into contact with the criminal justice system as victims and/or offenders. Larry Johnson, Director of Public Safety for GRPS outlined the required GRPS Reinstatement Training that is provided for students and their families as an expelled student is offered the opportunity for GRPS re-admittance. In addition to addressing the problem of already expelled students, GRPS has also initiated restorative justice programming in an effort to limit the number of student expulsions overall and in particular the problem of disproportionate minority expulsions.

The GRPS commitment to a cultural shift in discipline outcomes has resulted in the training of five GRPS staff members in restorative justice practices through the International Institute for Restorative Practices in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The five newly certified Restorative Practices trainers have trained an additional forty-four staff member including social workers, security officers, principals and teachers. Thus far approximately 725 students have participated in some form of restorative practices. Future plans include using trained community volunteers to serve as Restorative Discipline practitioners across GRPS K-12 schools.

After-school initiatives focused on prevention of victimization and delinquency are imperative for the time period between three in the afternoon and six in the evening. Previous trend research conducted within Grand Rapids revealed a spike in delinquent activity during this time period. This is significant as youth who engage in delinquent behaviors are at a higher risk of committing more serious crime in their early adult lives. Outcome evaluations of afterschool participants have shown consistently that those who participate in afterschool programs are less likely to show up on police reports.

Our Community's Children, a joint office between the City of Grand Rapids and the Grand Rapids Public Schools, provides leadership and vision toward the improvement of our youth through public policy and programming for after-school initiatives. Our Community's Children along with the ELO Network serves over 21,000 children at 180 sites with after-school programs. In addition, in 2010 the Grand Rapids Youth Master Plan provides clear outcome indicators for children and young adults through age twenty-one to be successful for college, work and life.

The report is a useful reference in developing the conditions for youth that will promote life-long learning, career and employment pathways, and strong networks of positive peers and adults. The Ready-By-21™ Framework defines five key outcome areas for all youth—Learning, Working, Thriving, Connecting and Leading that has relevance to violence and prevention strategies.

*Children are our most valued assets within the community and should be viewed within a community context that supports the child's health, education, social skills, family relationships, recreational needs, safety, housing and employment opportunities.*

*- Our Community's Children*

## NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

Grand Rapids Neighborhood Associations have a 45-year history of developing resident leadership and making sure that residents have a voice in decisions that affect their neighborhoods. There are 14 staffed Associations and several dozen volunteer run associations throughout the city of Grand Rapids.

Neighborhood associations are governed by resident board members and funded through Community Development Block Grants and other grants and fundraisers. The Grand Rapids Neighborhood Associations have a strong commitment to crime prevention and work closely with the Grand Rapids Police Department to reduce crime and increase safety in Grand Rapids neighborhoods. Association staff are trained as Crime Prevention Organizers by the GRPD and work daily with the Community Police Officers assigned to their neighborhoods.

The Associations use a community organizing model to develop resident leadership. Staffed neighborhood associations work to help neighbors with shared concerns to unify and work together as block groups or committees on their common issues. Neighborhood Associations work with resident's groups by providing training, support and access to resources needed to accomplish the groups' goals.

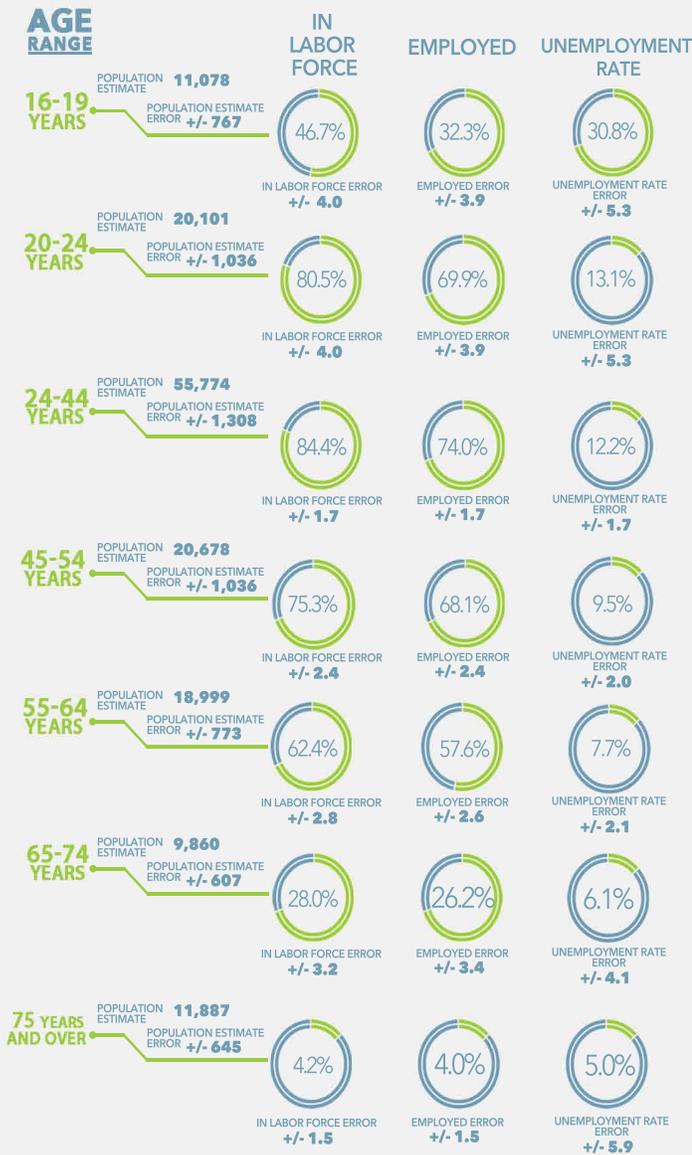
Neighborhood improvement efforts include working with residents on code enforcement on housing conditions, zoning and other land use issues. These efforts over the last four decades have led to increased citizen action at all levels of neighborhood and city leadership. Neighborhood leaders often serve on city committees and boards. Neighborhood association leaders facilitate conflict resolution and assist in community building in support of residents efforts for peaceful neighborhoods. Organizers are trusted liaisons for neighbors and police and often bring officers and neighbors together to work on issues of concern. SAFE Taskforce members and invited guests consistently discussed the importance of expanding the services and strength of neighborhood associations to include enhanced communication with local schools and other city agencies that serve neighborhood institutions.

What became quite evident during taskforce discussions is the importance of neighborhood-based organizations as community hubs for interaction and decision-making with local government on issues ranging from safe streets to area-specific planning strategies and housing code enforcement. Neighborhood Associations offer residents opportunities to cooperate with city leadership, as well as to challenge them, on issues of common interest. Including neighborhood association representatives at the table during city-wide policy discussions on all initiatives and programs that affect those areas are imperative to success.

## LABOR MARKET, EMPLOYMENT AND THE COMMUNITY



Table 1.2: Grand Rapids Unemployment/Labor Data by Age, 2011 through 2013.  
Data Provided by the Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives



The SAFE Taskforce committed an entire meeting agenda to presentations and discussions with invited guests regarding employment and labor issues and their relationship to violence and violence reduction. Invited guests included presenters from the Grand Rapids Urban League, the Area Community Services and Training Council ASCET, the Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives, and Steepletown Neighborhood. Discussions and presentations included information on the state of unemployment in Grand Rapids and Kent County, research concerning opportunity development in the job market and existing initiatives concerning job training and life skills initiative currently existing within Grand Rapids.

Ryan Gimarc of the Bureau of Labor Market and Information and Strategic Initiatives related that the unemployment rate in Grand Rapids is higher than state wide and nationwide averages. For a population of 148,377 individuals sixteen years of age and over in Grand Rapids, the estimated unemployment rate was averaged at 12.8% between 2011 and 2013. **When disaggregated by race the estimated unemployment rate for the African-American population within Grand Rapids during this time period was 27.8% and the Hispanic or Latino population unemployment rate was 18.0%.** Comparatively, for the white population the estimated unemployment average was 8.3%. Table 1.2 illustrates the unemployment estimates, including margins of error, by age between 2011 and 2013.

Further discussions included assessing program initiatives that are already in place which address the aforementioned job market issues. Jacob Mass from ASCET presented on twenty-four agencies across Michigan providing jobs, training and life skills in such areas as, manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture and correction. Capitalizing on

existing programs through further investment at the local level was further outlined in the One Solutions Report and discussed by Joe Jones of the Grand Rapids Urban League who pointed toward thematic areas of critical success in creating opportunities for sixteen through twenty-four year olds who not only suffer from unemployment but are also more likely to offend, as well as become victims of violence.

Themes included: 1) the need to rebuild a healthy sense of self, purpose, and social capital; 2) the need for navigation across systems; 3) the need for incorporation of social enterprise; and 4) the need for culturally competent employers willing to invest their social intellectual and financial capital. Dick Bulkowski of Steepletown Neighbors pointed out other findings from the One Solutions Report that these types of community based investments require mentors, employers, case managers and intervention programs as long term commitments rather than thirty day short-term investments.

- AREAS OF CRITICAL SUCCESS IN CREATING OPPORTUNITY FROM THE ONE SOLUTIONS REPORT
- REBUILDING A HEALTHY SENSE OF SELF, PURPOSE AND SOCIAL CAPITAL
  - NAVIGATION ACROSS SYSTEMS
  - INCORPORATION OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
  - CULTURALLY COMPETENT EMPLOYERS WILLING TO INVEST THEIR SOCIAL, INTELLECTUAL AND FINANCIAL CAPITAL
- JOE JONES, GRAND RAPIDS URBAN LEAGUE

## MENTAL HEALTH AND THE COMMUNITY

Discussion and presentations regarding the role of trauma, abuse, neglect, and addiction, their relationship to individual and community level mental health, and its further correlation with violence were discussed at length during SAFE Taskforce meetings. These issues and subsequent research are extremely complex and this report does not provide the proper format to discuss these issues and their complexity at great length. **For example, individuals with mental illnesses and coinciding violent behavior appears to be more common when there's also the presence of other risk factors.** These include substance abuse or dependence; a history of violence, juvenile detention, or physical abuse; and recent stressors such as being a crime victim, getting divorced, or losing a job. In addition, included within taskforce presentations and discussions were data obtained from mental health/public health outlets including:

- 1) the Institute For Health Recovery regarding addressing secondary trauma
- 2) the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention addressing the Adverse Childhood Experience Study
- 3) the Michigan Department of Community Health regarding profiles in drug overdose deaths
- 4) the Kent County Prevention Coalition, concerning prevention of youth alcohol and drug use

Along with these data sources and discussion, taskforce members focused upon issues of stigma associated with mental illness within the Grand Rapids community and misperceptions by members of the general public in regard to correlations between mental illness, crime and violence.

In addition to these data and sources, taskforce members were presented with information and discussion surrounding the history of community based Mental Health First Aid and the promotion of Mental Health First Aid Five Step Action Plan.

This program trains community members and prepares them to interact with fellow community members involved in mental health crisis, directing those individuals toward professional help, intervention and healthcare providers. Scott Gilman, Executive

Director of Network 180 provided the SAFE Taskforce with a ten year vision whereby every citizen in the City of Grand Rapids will be trained in Mental Health First Aid. Included within this vision is a developed infrastructure, collaborative partners and financial support that will establish and promote trauma informed training and establish critical incident stress management teams within the city in an effort to provide Mental Health First Aid to all citizens while reducing the stigma associated with mental illness.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID FIVE STEP ACTION PLAN

**ALGEE**

- 1) ASSESS FOR RISK OF SUICIDE OR HARM
- 2) LISTEN NONJUDGMENTALLY
- 3) GIVE REASSURANCE AND INFORMATION
- 4) ENCOURAGE APPROPRIATE PROFESSIONAL HELP
- 5) ENCOURAGE SELF-HELP AND OTHER SUPPORT STRATEGIES

-WWW.MENTALHEALTHFIRSTAID.ORG

## POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE COMMUNITY

SAFE Taskforce discussions and presentations focused firmly on the role of the police within the community and advanced technology. Tension and conflict between police and ethnic minority communities continues to be a major public policy concern throughout the United States. Specifically, these tensions have been exacerbated by recent nation-wide incidents and community protests in regard to the death of citizens in New York City and Ferguson, Missouri during altercations with police personnel. At a national level, as well as at a local level citizens and policymakers have firmly advanced the argument that problematic individual level police discretion may be controlled with the enhanced technology of police worn body cameras. In addition to body cameras, policing agencies have begun adopting technological advances in gunfire detection which have been implemented within geographic hotspot gunfire areas throughout many cities in the United States. The SAFE Taskforce discussed and reviewed the use of body worn cameras as an avenue to provide a higher level of

police accountability during citizen interactions within Grand Rapids. In addition, the SAFE Taskforce and the City of Grand Rapids Police Department reviewed and discussed the gunfire detection and location technology known as ShotSpotter. In addition to these two technological advances, SAFE Taskforce members discussed the value of fixed closed-circuit television (CCTV) and the use of citizen police oversight to increase police accountability.

In the wake of recent citizen deaths during police altercations there has been a public and political outcry for the use of body cameras by local police officers across the United States. This strong and vocal argument occurring also within Grand Rapids has led to recent city commission hearings on the subject at the end of 2014 and the placement of selected body camera research documents on the City of Grand Rapids website. Following the national conversation on this subject, numerous cities within the United States have implemented pilot programs using a select number of body cameras within specific geographical areas. SAFE Taskforce members discussed the potential benefits and concerns of adopting required body cameras. From an external viewpoint body cameras offer the ability for police departments and city officials to resolve citizen and officer complaints regarding probable cause and officer initiated pro-active and reactive police stops. Internally, the data garnered from the use of body cameras offer police department command staff members the opportunity to amend problematic policy and training initiatives. Concerns that SAFE Taskforce members discussed include possible negative impacts on community relationships, officer concerns regarding an undermining of managerial authority, privacy considerations within private property encounters, management of outcomes, data management issues and financial costs.

On October 24, 2014 the SAFE Taskforce meeting was held at the Grand Rapids Police Department. In addition to SAFE Taskforce members, Chief Rahinsky of the GRPD and his command staff were present for the meeting. During this meeting a demonstration of ShotSpotter technology was introduced by Jack Pontius of SST, Inc. SST Inc. is a privately held company possessing multiple patents in the area of acoustic gunshot location technology. Founded in 1996 and headquartered in Newark, California ShotSpotter provides gunfire alert and analysis solutions to local policing agencies. In essence ShotSpotter provides geographically targeted acoustic surveillance of gunfire incidents in an effort to provide policing agencies with faster response time and more in depth data regarding the location and severity of the incident. After the presentation of ShotSpotter technology, discussion and questions amongst SAFE Taskforce members and Chief Rahinsky were fielded by Mr. Pontius. Included among these discussions and questions were the value of ShotSpotter as a tool within an overall violence initiative, costs (approximately \$45,000.00 per square mile), citizen privacy concerns, and the value of perceptions of this technology by policing agencies that are currently using the product.

Further follow-up of ShotSpotter technology was ascertained by select Taskforce members during December 2014 when they traveled to South Bend, Indiana. The South Bend Group Violence Intervention (SBGVI) uses ShotSpotter in conjunction with a wider strategy initiative developed by the National Network for safe Communities. SBGVI engages directly with groups as opposed to gangs under the idea that an overt focus on "gangs" excludes loosely affiliated groups that contribute heavily to violence production that may not be considered a gang in an historical sense. The engagement by SBGVI members with these groups focuses on a credible moral message against violence, a credible law enforcement message about the consequences of further violence and a genuine offer of help for those who want it. The South Bend Program and the National Network of Safe Communities is rooted in the methodologies emanating from the Boston Ceasefire Project and subsequent iterations of violence reduction programming such as the Indianapolis Violence Reduction Partnership.

**THE GROUP VIOLENCE INTERVENTION (GVI) REDUCES VIOLENT CRIME  
WHEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS JOIN TOGETHER WITH LAW  
ENFORCEMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS TO FOCUS AN  
ANTIVIOLENCE MESSAGE ON HIGHLY ACTIVE STREET GROUPS  
[HTTP://NNSCOMMUNITIES.ORG/](http://nnscommunities.org/)**

## *NATIONAL LEVEL VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAMMING*

The National Network for Safe Communities and its predecessor Boston Ceasefire is rooted in a deterrence based approach to violence reduction whereby the three components of deterrence (celerity, certainty and severity) are equally important in messaging consequences to would be and actual violent offenders at the neighborhood level. Using a "lever pulling" approach consequences are swiftly meted out to individuals who are most engaged in violent actions in the community. In addition, positive services such as job training and life skill courses are offered to those individuals choosing healthy and non-violent trajectories. These programs, which can be contextually tailored to specific community needs, are reliant on strong partnerships and firm leadership across criminal justice agencies and service providers.

Further discussion of technological advancement in policing operations focused on possible implementation of closed circuit television technology (CCTV) at fixed public locations within Grand Rapids that are identified hotspots for violence and increased calls for service. Previous research (2011) measuring crime reduction in Baltimore after the implementation of CCTV technology revealed a reduction in violent and property crime within camera areas without signs of crime displacement and a marginal level of diffusion of benefits. In addition, cost-benefit-analysis of CCTV implementation in Baltimore revealed positive findings.

In addition to examining local level conditions and correlates of violence production at the community level within Grand Rapids, the SAFE Taskforce also reviewed and discussed violence reduction initiatives that have been and are being applied throughout other communities in the United States. cursory discussions include programs such as Boston Ceasefire and its derivatives such as Operation Peace Works in Ventura County, California and the Indianapolis Violence Reduction Partnership. In addition and specifically, the SAFE Taskforce received two presentations based upon violence reduction initiatives taking place within communities in Chicago, Illinois and New Orleans, Louisiana. The two programs, Cure Violence (Chicago) and NOLAforLife (New Orleans) were chosen for further presentation and review due to the fact that two of the SAFE Taskforce members had close relationships with these programs.

Cure Violence, a partnership between the Chicago Police Department, community members and the University of Illinois Chicago employs former gang members as "violence interrupters" in an effort to mediate gang conflicts and prevent retaliatory violence and gang-shootings. Cure Violence applies a public health approach focusing on prevention, intervention and community mobilization to affect geographically targeted areas of concentrated violence in Chicago neighborhoods. Main components of this program include outreach work and conflict mediation; community involvement, education, faith involvement, and police participation (McGarrell, Hipple, Bynum, Perez, Gregory, Kane, Ransford, 2013).

NOLAforLife, New Orleans' comprehensive murder reduction **strategy** encompasses local level partnerships from prevention and intervention through enforcement and intervention. In an effort to stop shootings NOLA links with supporting initiatives including group violence reduction strategies, a multi-agency gang unit, CeaseFire New Orleans, Project Safe Neighborhood and violence crime impact teams. Goals include promoting jobs and opportunity, strengthening the New Orleans Police Department and rebuilding neighborhoods. Achievement of these goals rests upon the success of inter-linking agencies and a multitude of partnership programming for targeted areas of high gang violence.

#### **NOLAFORLIFE**

- STOP THE SHOOTINGS
- PROMOTE JOBS AND OPPORTUNITY
- STRENGTHEN NEW ORLEANS POLICE DEPARTMENT
- INVEST IN PREVENTION
- GET INVOLVED AND REBUILD NEIGHBORHOODS

[HTTP://NOLAFORLIFE.ORG/STRATEGY/INITIATIVES/](http://nolaforlife.org/strategy/initiatives/)

There are specific differences between the violence reduction initiatives discussed, and there are a multitude of other programs, and derivatives of these existing programs beyond what is mentioned within this report. In addition, there are some specific considerations when attempting to replicate already existing frameworks and programs. First,

it is important to consider the context of violence in Grand Rapids as compared to the aforementioned existing violence reduction initiatives and their specific locales. For example in 2012, New Orleans experienced 193 murders. As noted within this report, between 2009 and 2013, Grand Rapids experienced on average eighteen attempted murders per year. The difference in the magnitude of violence across differing geographies is a contextual consideration that must be addressed prior to investment in violence initiative programming. In addition, the Cure Violence interrupter initiative focuses on making use of an entrenched gang population within targeted neighborhood geographies. How many of the on average eighteen attempted murders per year within Grand Rapids or the forty-nine on average aggravated assaults per year in Grand Rapids between 2009 and 2013 were gang or gang retaliation related? While both the Cure Violence initiative and NOLAforLife offer important strategy development considerations to address, the context of any future program initiatives must match the objective reality of Grand Rapids violence data.

Therefore, the application of a partnership strategy as stipulated in the NOLAforLife model may be an instructive starting point for a Grand Rapids violence reduction initiative as long as the developers of a strategy remain cognizant of the objective data regarding violence that occurs within Grand Rapids. In addition, partnership development with existing services and agencies will further offer a context specific strategy for Grand Rapids.

In addition to the **development of a local contextual fit**, when promoting a violence reduction initiative for the City of Grand Rapids, we can look to some of the general areas of success and failure from different locales as an avenue to insure proper implementation. Thematically, there are five areas of consideration that have been associated with success and failure across the multitude of violence reduction initiatives implemented in the United States. First, the importance of a strong working group cannot be emphasized enough. Successful violence reduction initiatives while varying in focus resoundingly rely on strong partnerships across varying government and private organizations at the public, parochial and private levels. Second, programming that contained a mentoring component at the community level for high risk adolescents were found to be especially helpful in regard to gang initiated violence reduction. Third, violence reduction initiatives that identify risk factors and high risk individuals have been found to have broader benefits over the long run than city-wide programs. Fourth, transferability across jurisdictions and succession planning in regard to the developed working partnerships is imperative. Finally, the use of evidence based prevention methods such as directed patrol with on-going assessment and refinement (i.e. a consistent evaluative feedback loop) will promote long term violence reduction.



## SECTION 2: SAFE TASKFORCE COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

A total of three community conversations occurred between the months of November, 2014 and January, 2015. Each conversation was designed to capture the attitudes and perception of a unique group of stakeholder who reside, or work in the City of Grand Rapids. Group 1 consisted of adult residents with a historical connection to street level violence. Group 2 was composed of community police officers in the city of Grand Rapids. Group 3 consisted of young adults residing in one inner-city neighborhood. Each conversation revolved around participant perceptions of crime, safety, and police community relations and was attended by 8-12 members of the respective target audience. **The taskforce designed each community conversation with the intent of creating an inclusive space for a full range of voices to be heard. As a word of caution, all opinions and perceptions expressed herein should not be considered a representation of the collective attitudes and opinions of all members of the community. The perceptions garnered from individuals within this section represent nuances shaped by culture, age, race and socio-economic status. While useful, the following findings represent only the opinions and attitudes of those who participated in each of the respective conversations.** The taskforce has attempted to highlight consistencies across conversations where possible, but even in such cases, the attitudes and perceptions are likely to vary across other representatives of these communities.

There were a number of consistencies across the conversations as well as some unique issues and concerns raised by the participants in each group. The discussion that follows will highlight several issues from the perspective of the participants. Specifically, the issues of community safety, sense of community, juvenile gangs, proactive policing strategies, police community relations, and the lack of pro-social activities for youth will be discussed.

To begin the discussion, the taskforce would like to highlight a positive consensus that emerged across each of the community conversations. Specifically, the residents, both adults and youth, reported feeling safe in their community. While members of each group acknowledged unwanted incidences of violence and crime, the participants felt safe living, working, or attending school in their community. (See discussion of gangs below for a more nuanced view of this issue from the perspective of youth in the community). All three groups provided accounts of increased safety, reductions in crime, and growing sense of community in the area in recent years. Their respective comments are best captured in the words of one community police officer, who shared his experience in December, 2014.

*"I think there is... especially you know in the last several years, there's been a strong feel of community amongst residents, business owners... you know the neighborhood associations... I think it's changed a lot."*

COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER (DECEMBER, 2014)

### **POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS & PRO-ACTIVE POLICE STRATEGIES**

In this section of the report, the taskforce will present a variety of related issues that emerged from our conversations. Specifically, the discussion will focus on police community relations and strategies of policing that promote healthy community relations. It is important to note that these issues are not unique to the City of Grand Rapids and there is a wealth of criminological research going back several decades that capture both the issues identified here as well as various strategies employed by police agencies to build trust and improve community relations. It would not be feasible to present a comprehensive discussion of this research here. As such we will focus on identifying a few of the significant issues that emerged in our conversations and where possible, attempt to situate these issues within a discussion of similar research findings.

*"I don't know... it's not the fact that we don't trust em... they...they.... make us not trust em."  
"Yeah.. it's not the fact that we just woke up and said ooohh, forget the police, I don't like em."  
"If you harassin' somebody... then, I mean why would you trust 'em? Like if somebody constantly...  
just every time....just constantly... just...messin' with you, messin' with you, messin' with you."*

YOUTH COMMUNITY RESIDENT (JANUARY, 2015)

Police-Community relations have been in the spotlight in recent months after events in numerous cities, including Ferguson, Missouri and New York City. The authors of this report would like to point out that Grand Rapids shares little in common with either location and to make comparisons to those locations would make little sense. However, the issues pushed to the forefront by these incidents are issues that plague a great many locations, both urban and rural. These events have started conversations about police-community relations and the treatment of young minority youth in urban centers. The experiences captured by these community conversations reveal that African-Americans in Grand Rapids report experiences with the police that are similar to other inner-city minorities, experiences that are well documented by criminological research. There is a level of mistrust, created by what is perceived as a pattern of harassment, being viewed as a symbolic assailant, experiences (including vicarious experiences) with what is perceived to be discriminatory treatment, and most certainly influenced by what criminologists refer to as the vicious cycle. The following account of mistrust, resulting from perceived harassment was captured in the Youth conversation on January, 2015.

The negative perceptions expressed by these youth are not the only issue. After a variety of negative interactions with youth,

*"It's about having a relationship. If you don't have a relationship... Then I don't care what you say.... You're the enemy. You know... you don't see me until you think there's a problem down here... and then when you see me you forceful... so I'm not trying to hear you. You know, when it's peace... why not come down here and form relationships. ... you know... and that's the key to this whole area here. If you communicate with me.... just like you doin' now, then we can solve some problems."*

ADULT COMMUNITY RESIDENT

police can develop negative perceptions of youth in the community as well. This leads to a vicious cycle, wherein both parties' actions are influenced by their preconceived notions of the other. Thus, at the outset of an encounter, youth mistrust and anger is matched by a level of suspiciousness and hostility on the part of the police officer. This has been found to result in the youth being placed under arrest for what criminologists refer to as contempt of cop. The following account of the vicious cycle was captured in the community conversation in December, 2014.

*"And a lot of those incidents come because those kids are frustrated as far as you searchin my backpack..... Now you writing them up.. you buildin like that.. you know what I mean. It kind of instilling the whole neighborhood to kind of act a certain way when the police come round ... You know and it's like the kids, they not able to connect, because they see too much of the police or whatever, do too many things towards them."*

ADULT COMMUNITY RESIDENT (NOVEMBER, 2014)

Community mistrust of the police was also found to be attributed to what some members described as a disconnect between the police and the community. One resident shared this account.

*"A lot of these community leaders don't even know these people in the community. They don't know em... so how can you form a relationship with some bad kids... when you don't know they bad kids. You don't know nothing about this child, but you call him bad kid because he walk with his pants below his butt. Yeah, that's a bad child....but this cat getting A's and B's in school."*

ADULT COMMUNITY RESIDENT (NOVEMBER, 2014)

This experience was shared by others who felt that the police were very disconnected from the community and the lack of communication only served to exacerbate levels of mistrust and perpetuate negative stereotypes about the community.

Please note that the perceptions captured here are not necessarily representative of the entire population in these areas. **While clearly these are concerns for some members of the community, these comments are not intended to represent the voice of the entire community nor the perceived relationship between all GRPD officers and the community.** In fact, the community police officers who gathered for one community conversation made note of the many positive relationships they have with community members. They noted that many members of the community were routinely willing to assist the police and that many healthy relationships exist as well. The point here is not delegitimize the negative experiences and perceptions, but rather to suggest that this is only part of the reality.

Given that the problems identified here are not new, nor are they unique to the city of Grand Rapids, there has been a wealth of research into potential solutions. **It has been pointed out by some that the reactive nature of police work is part of the problem. It can produce inconsistencies in enforcement, specifically during incidents related to order maintenance and service, which can lead to confusion.** Furthermore, when a behavior is generally ignored by the police, but responded to when a call for service occurs, this tends to fuel the belief that the police response is nothing more than a form of harassment.

It should be noted however, that participants in each group also acknowledged that the gangs in Grand Rapids do create problems for the entire community. Gang related violence is not altogether uncommon and the ongoing feuds between rival gangs contribute to a loss of safety for youth within their own community. All of the youth who participate in the community conversation acknowledged that there are places within their community that they do not feel safe. Gangs and gang turf were the primary reason for these feelings. Youth participants also pointed out that this was only a small portion of the overall community. In most public spaces, they reported feeling safe. Youth expressed further concern over what they perceived as easy access to guns and the number of individuals who carry weapons.

## GANGS

There was a strong consensus across the three community conversations regarding the issue of gangs in Grand Rapids. Members of each group appear to share a similar assessment regarding the presence of, and organization of gangs in Grand Rapids. Gangs in Grand Rapids tend to be heavily localized, down to the street or block level. While these loosely organized groups most certainly constitute a gang, this form and organization is somewhat unique. Participants in each conversation agreed that Grand Rapids does not have a serious problem with gangs.

It should be noted however, that participants in each group also acknowledged that the gangs in Grand Rapids do create problems for the entire community. Gang related violence is not altogether uncommon and the ongoing feuds between rival gangs contribute to a loss of safety for youth within their own community. All of the youth who participate in the community conversation acknowledged that there are places within their community that they do not feel safe. Gangs and gang turf were the primary reason for these feelings. Youth participants also pointed out that this was only a small portion of the overall community. In most public spaces, they reported feeling safe. Youth expressed further concern over what they perceived as easy access to guns and the number of individuals who carry weapons.

***“When we say gangs, from our perspective, we don’t see the traditional west coast gangs... what I don’t see is an ongoing feud between bloods and crips, or gangs out of Chicago or gangs out of Detroit it seems like it’s much more organic and neighborhood generated.. even down to the street level here in Grand Rapids. ... I think our gang situation is unique to some... to other cities our size.”***

**COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER (DECEMBER, 2014)**

Finally, participants in all three groups reported that ongoing feuds between gangs can result from petty conflicts, such as a dispute over a girl, or longstanding feuds between rival members propagated by ongoing communication over social media. The negative role of social media in creating and perpetuation social conflict between youth was highlighted by all three community conversations.

## LACK OF PRO-SOCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH

When it comes to activities for youth within the local neighborhood it was noted by both adult residents and youth that there is a lack of pro-social opportunities for youth. Further, adult residents expressed concern over both whom and how, attempts are made to mentor youth. Each of these concerns was expressed by an adult resident during the November, 2014 conversation.

*"What we need to do.. is get these kids around here something to do.. and not only just something to do.. we need to have the proper people working in there. They need to get up under people that's been through there that's done walked them miles... that come from around here.. they see they changed they life around, right ... that's how they connect, right."*

*ADULT COMMUNITY RESIDENT (NOVEMBER, 2014)*

*"Everything that we got nowadays is too far out. You wanna go play basketball.. oh you gotta go past 28th street."*

*YOUTH COMMUNITY RESIDENT (JANUARY, 2015)*

Adult residents also reported a considerable skepticism about previous attempts to help residents in their community. Large parts of the skepticism revolved around the notion that community based organizations were more interested in taking money than helping residents. The skepticism was matched by an equally palpable sense of futility about future efforts to help residents in their community. Adult residents expressed a concern that parents need help and were concerned the response, too often, was to remove the child, rather than to provide help.



## SECTION 3: SAFE TASKFORCE POLICE CALLS FOR SERVICE DATA

SAFE Taskforce members met with Grand Rapids Police Department crime analysis personnel and Command Staff members regarding police data requests. Requested data included city-wide Uniform Crime Report (UCR) and calls for service data (CFS) for the years 2013 and 2014. These objective data requests were made in an effort to ascertain the amount of calls for service for police personnel by Grand Rapids citizens across the areas of crime, order maintenance and service. Grand Rapids Police Department personnel worked with the SAFE Taskforce to develop an objective representation of reactive police response across the differing police beats throughout the city. The following analysis represents the total reported UCR Part 1 and Part 2 crime offenses by geographic beat and the total number of CFS for police response by geographic beat across a two year period. CFS were categorized according to type of call.

Categories included calls for possible violent offenses, property offenses, disorderly conduct offenses, quality of life offenses, traffic offenses, medical needs and a category for miscellaneous offenses. **It is important to note that UCR categories reflect that a crime did occur and the offender may or may not have been apprehended. CFS calls merely represent the nature of the call not that an offense had actually occurred.** Below is an example of the types of calls that fit within each of the aforementioned categories:

TABLE 3.1: CALLS FOR SERVICE CATEGORIES

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF CALLS
Violent	General Assault, Domestic Assault, Robbery
Property	Burglary, Alarm Company Response, Retail Fraud
Disorderly	Disorderly Person, Gambling, Harassment
Quality of Life	Barking Dog, Fireworks, Loitering Complaint
Traffic	Property Damage Accident, Reckless Driving
Medical	DOA Natural Causes, Mental Institution Walkaway
Miscellaneous	Request for Canine, Parole Violation, Lost Property

What is also important to note is that most of the CFS received by GRPS are order maintenance and service requests by citizens as opposed to calls regarding criminal actions. As CFS are made by citizens, the GRPD Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system is used to code and prioritize calls based on seriousness for appropriate response time.

TABLE 3.2: PART 1 AND PART 2 UNIFORM CRIME REPORT OFFENSES AND CALLS FOR SERVICE 2013.

Table 3.2 reflects UCR Offenses and CFS calls by category for 2013. Each of the twenty-four geographic police beats is listed in the far left column followed by UCR Offenses and CFS Categories as a percent of the 2013 total. The total for number of offenses and calls for each category are represented across the bottom row. Percentages highlighted in red represent the top five police beats across each category of offenses or calls. Each of the four police service areas (East, North, South and West) have police beats represented in top five categories. For example, the South 6 Beat represented 7.7% of the total 23,837 UCR Offenses recorded by GRPD in 2013. In addition, of the 67,793 CFS recorded and responded to by GRPD in 2013, 23,837 were documented as UCR offenses by the police. In other words, 65% of the calls for police service in 2013 were order maintenance and service calls as opposed to crime calls. Table 3.3 provides an indication of the same UCR offenses and CFS by category across geographical beat for 2014. Comparatively we see 6,234 less reported UCR Part 1 and UCR Part 2 crimes in 2014 than in 2013. Yet, in 2014 GRPD received 886 more CFS than in 2013.

BEAT	UCR OFFENSES	VIOLENT CFS	PROPERTY CFS	DISORDERLY CFS	QUALITY OF LIFE CFS	TRAFFIC CFS	MEDICAL CFS	MISC. CFS
EAST 1	6.7%	6.4%	7.5%	4.9%	5.5%	4.9%	4.0%	5.9%
EAST 2	2.6%	2.6%	3.0%	1.7%	2.9%	2.4%	2.0%	2.4%
EAST 3	0.9%	0.9%	1.4%	0.8%	1.1%	2.9%	1.7%	1.1%
EAST 4	3.0%	2.6%	4.7%	1.8%	2.6%	5.2%	3.1%	2.1%
EAST 5	3.9%	3.7%	5.1%	2.6%	2.9%	2.7%	2.3%	2.6%
EAST 6	0.9%	1.1%	1.5%	0.5%	0.9%	1.5%	1.6%	0.9%
EAST 7	1.8%	2.2%	1.7%	1.1%	1.6%	1.9%	1.4%	1.8%
EAST 8	3.7%	4.2%	3.8%	3.7%	4.2%	3.0%	3.0%	3.2%
NORTH 1	1.8%	1.8%	1.9%	1.3%	2.5%	3.7%	4.3%	2.3%
NORTH 2	5.7%	7.5%	4.8%	6.4%	7.2%	5.1%	7.8%	6.2%
NORTH 3	2.2%	2.8%	2.1%	2.5%	2.5%	1.0%	2.1%	2.0%
NORTH 4	1.4%	1.3%	1.1%	1.1%	1.6%	2.0%	1.4%	1.0%
NORTH 5	3.9%	3.9%	5.3%	3.3%	3.1%	5.9%	4.6%	3.9%
NORTH 6	0.8%	0.5%	1.7%	0.5%	1.5%	3.1%	1.0%	1.0%
NORTH 7	1.9%	1.5%	2.8%	2.3%	3.2%	2.4%	2.8%	1.3%
NORTH 8	1.8%	2.1%	1.9%	1.7%	3.2%	3.1%	1.8%	1.8%
SOUTH 1	1.4%	1.1%	2.1%	1.5%	3.2%	1.5%	1.9%	1.2%
SOUTH 2	2.3%	1.2%	2.7%	1.6%	3.3%	1.1%	1.4%	1.3%
SOUTH 3	3.8%	4.2%	3.4%	3.7%	2.9%	1.4%	2.5%	3.1%
SOUTH 4	4.8%	5.1%	4.5%	3.9%	3.0%	1.4%	3.1%	3.1%
SOUTH 5	3.2%	2.9%	1.6%	2.6%	1.7%	0.7%	1.7%	2.3%
SOUTH 6	7.7%	8.5%	6.2%	6.5%	6.6%	2.7%	5.0%	6.2%
SOUTH 7	1.4%	1.6%	2.0%	2.3%	1.0%	4.2%	1.9%	1.7%
SOUTH 8	2.1%	2.3%	2.3%	1.7%	1.7%	2.9%	1.9%	2.2%
WEST 1	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.7%	1.0%	0.9%	0.3%
WEST 2	1.3%	1.2%	1.5%	1.4%	2.1%	2.0%	2.6%	1.3%
WEST 3	4.6%	5.6%	3.6%	5.4%	6.8%	3.4%	4.8%	3.9%
WEST 4	5.4%	6.9%	5.4%	6.8%	5.2%	5.8%	7.3%	5.6%
WEST 5	3.9%	3.9%	3.2%	5.2%	4.1%	5.5%	4.6%	3.8%
WEST 6	2.7%	3.7%	2.9%	4.0%	4.5%	3.9%	4.1%	3.4%
WEST 7	3.6%	2.2%	3.3%	5.6%	2.8%	6.0%	3.7%	9.0%
WEST 8	3.8%	3.8%	4.3%	11.5%	3.9%	5.4%	7.4%	6.9%
UNKNOWN	4.5%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	5.3%
TOTAL	23,837	15,760	10,611	9,759	12,641	9,513	3,909	5,600

TABLE 3.3: PART 1 AND PART 2 UNIFORM CRIME REPORT OFFENSES AND CALLS FOR SERVICE 2014.

BEAT	UCR OFFENSES	VIOLENT CFS	PROPERTY CFS	DISORDERLY CFS	QUALITY OF LIFE CFS	TRAFFIC CFS	MEDICAL CFS	MISC. CFS
EAST 1	6.0%	6.1%	7.0%	4.6%	4.7%	5.2%	4.2%	5.2%
EAST 2	2.5%	2.4%	3.1%	1.8%	2.8%	2.8%	2.3%	1.9%
EAST 3	1.3%	0.8%	2.0%	0.6%	1.1%	2.9%	1.3%	0.9%
EAST 4	2.8%	2.3%	5.1%	1.5%	2.2%	5.5%	3.2%	2.8%
EAST 5	4.2%	3.7%	6.0%	2.4%	2.3%	2.9%	2.8%	2.8%
EAST 6	1.1%	1.2%	1.6%	0.7%	0.9%	1.5%	1.3%	1.1%
EAST 7	1.6%	2.0%	1.6%	1.1%	1.3%	1.9%	1.5%	2.1%
EAST 8	4.0%	4.9%	4.3%	3.5%	3.8%	3.7%	2.7%	3.1%
NORTH 1	2.5%	2.1%	2.2%	1.6%	2.6%	3.9%	3.9%	2.6%
NORTH 2	5.6%	7.6%	4.7%	6.2%	7.5%	5.0%	8.1%	6.5%
NORTH 3	1.8%	2.4%	1.7%	1.9%	2.9%	1.1%	2.1%	2.0%
NORTH 4	1.1%	1.4%	1.1%	0.9%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%	1.2%
NORTH 5	3.6%	3.4%	4.6%	2.7%	2.5%	4.8%	3.7%	3.8%
NORTH 6	0.7%	0.5%	1.8%	0.9%	1.5%	2.4%	1.4%	1.1%
NORTH 7	1.5%	1.1%	2.3%	1.8%	3.5%	3.0%	1.7%	1.5%
NORTH 8	1.6%	1.8%	1.7%	1.7%	4.1%	3.0%	1.9%	1.9%
SOUTH 1	1.3%	1.0%	1.9%	1.1%	3.6%	2.1%	1.0%	1.2%
SOUTH 2	1.7%	1.3%	2.1%	1.9%	3.3%	1.4%	1.5%	1.1%
SOUTH 3	4.0%	4.9%	3.9%	4.2%	2.9%	1.8%	3.1%	3.3%
SOUTH 4	4.4%	4.4%	4.7%	3.9%	3.3%	1.7%	2.5%	3.6%
SOUTH 5	2.5%	2.5%	1.8%	2.0%	1.7%	0.7%	1.8%	1.7%
SOUTH 6	7.2%	8.5%	6.5%	6.7%	6.6%	3.7%	5.3%	4.9%
SOUTH 7	1.4%	2.2%	1.9%	2.2%	1.1%	3.1%	1.7%	2.0%
SOUTH 8	2.3%	2.8%	2.6%	1.8%	1.6%	2.6%	2.4%	2.8%
WEST 1	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.3%	0.6%	0.9%	1.2%	0.4%
WEST 2	1.4%	1.3%	1.4%	1.4%	2.0%	2.0%	2.4%	1.1%
WEST 3	5.0%	5.7%	4.2%	4.9%	7.6%	3.6%	5.1%	4.5%
WEST 4	5.7%	6.8%	4.8%	6.5%	5.4%	5.5%	5.9%	5.9%
WEST 5	3.9%	3.3%	3.3%	5.2%	3.9%	5.0%	3.9%	3.5%
WEST 6	2.8%	3.4%	2.7%	4.2%	4.9%	3.5%	3.8%	3.3%
WEST 7	3.1%	2.7%	3.2%	6.6%	2.9%	5.8%	5.8%	8.0%
WEST 8	4.3%	4.9%	3.8%	13.4%	3.2%	5.2%	8.9%	7.1%
UNKNOWN	6.8%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	5.1%
TOTAL	17,603	15,665	9,772	9,487	14,194	9,289	4,409	5,863

In 2014, almost 75% of police calls for service were related to order maintenance and service as opposed to UCR offenses. In essence the police provided more reactive response to the community yet less of those responses were related to reported crime. **As previously discussed in section two, reactive policing response associated with order maintenance and service requests increases the capacity to produce inconsistencies in enforcement and thereby enhance perceived instances of harassment.**

Tables 3.4 and 3.5 provide clear breakdown, by year, of the geographic areas within Grand Rapids that contributed most to UCR Part 1 and UCR part 2 offenses, as well as CFS related to violence. The police beats representing the highest percentage across these categories have been ranked. These police beats are the geographic areas most in need of intervention through the evidence based directed patrol and programming initiatives summarized in section 1 of this report. .

**TABLE 3.4: UCR OFFENSES % OF TOTAL RANKED BY POLICE BEAT 2013 AND 2014.**

Ranking by Police Beat		2013 UCR Offenses % of Total		2014 UCR Offenses % of Total	
#1	South 6	7.7%	South 6	7.2%	
#2	East 1	6.7%	East 1	6.0%	
#3	North 2	5.7%	West 4	5.7%	
#4	West 4	5.4%	North 2	5.6%	
#5	South 4	4.8%	West 3	5.0%	

**TABLE 3.5: VIOLENT CALLS FOR SERVICE % OF TOTAL BY POLICE BEAT 2013 AND 2014**

Ranking by Police Beat		2013 UCR Offenses % of Total		2014 UCR Offenses % of Total	
#1	South 6	7.7%	South 6	7.2%	
#2	East 1	6.7%	East 1	6.0%	
#3	North 2	5.7%	West 4	5.7%	
#4	West 4	5.4%	North 2	5.6%	
#5	South 4	4.8%	West 3	5.0%	

It is clear that the South 6 police beat retained the number one ranking for UCR offenses and CFS across both years of data. It is also important to note that each of these beats have similarities and differences in demographic composition, population and housing density, residential and business density etc. Therefore, specific interventions may be more suited to one police beat over another police beat. In other words, while they may rank highest across police beats based on the categories listed above further analysis may be needed to ascertain the proper intervention for differing beats



## 5 PEACE PILLAR RECOMMENDATIONS

For the past eleven months, the Safe Alliances For Everyone (SAFE) Taskforce met to investigate root causes to the issue of violence in our neighborhoods and to develop recommendations to move Grand Rapids towards PEACE. This multi-sector, multigenerational collaborative has engaged in an exhaustive study of national best practices, local data, and community listening sessions, to uncover the risk factors, protective factors, and missing factors contributing to the challenges of violence impacting our city, especially young adults between the ages of 15-24.

We have developed a synthesized snapshot of the research methods employed by the taskforce and provided 5 PEACE pillar recommendations:

- P - Prevention Investment
- E - Eliminate Violent Acts
- A - Activate Economic Opportunity
- C - Community Engagement, Education, and Empowerment
- E - Effect Positive Change in Public Institutions [Local, County, and State]

While the vision for SAFE was conceived by municipality leadership, the work of SAFE is the direct result of the collective wisdom, personal investment, and shared passion of resident leaders eager to do the heavy lifting required to spark social change.

# P. PREVENTION INVESTMENTS

## SAFE TASKFORCE PEACE RECOMMENDATIONS

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE MULTI-FACETED AND AIMED AT PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE.

### SHORT TERM (6-12 MONTHS)

ESTABLISH DEDICATED STAFF, GUIDED BY A LOCAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL, TO SPEARHEAD THIS WORK AND BUILD PARTNERSHIPS FOR COLLECTIVE, SYSTEMIC IMPLEMENTATION. IMPLEMENT THE CRIME REDUCTION STRATEGY OF SOUTH BEND OR NOLA FOR LIFE. PLACE ALL RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE FORM OF A STRATEGY DOCUMENT. APPOINT OR HIRE SOMEONE WITH DIRECT ACCESS TO MAYOR AND CITY MANAGER TO OVERSEE VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY. THIS PERSON WOULD COORDINATE ACTIVITIES CITY OR COUNTY-WIDE AS WELL AS CONVENE REGULAR MEETINGS WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT, MENTAL HEALTH, PROBATION, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND OTHERS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES AND ADDRESS SPECIFIC ISSUES AND INDIVIDUALS IN A PROACTIVE MANNER.

EDUCATE THE PUBLIC BY OFFERING A PUBLIC TRAINING CENTER WITH EXPERTS TEACHING CITIZENS PRACTICAL LIVING TOOLS (KNOW YOUR RIGHTS, ILLEGAL BEHAVIOR, GRPD SYSTEMS (TECHNOLOGIES, FILING CITIZEN COMPLAINTS), SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (SBTDC, BANKING SYSTEM), SILENT OBSERVER (ADDRESS REPORTING CONCERNS)

INVEST DOLLARS AND CONDUCT THE "MENTAL HEALTH AIDE" TRAININGS FOR ALL SCHOOLS, AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS AND LOCAL CONGREGATIONS

HIGHLIGHT ACADEMIC SUCCESSES FOR THOSE AGED 15-24

SUPPORT AND PROMOTE "GRADE SCHOOL TO GRAD SCHOOL" AND "TO COLLEGE, THROUGH COLLEGE" EFFORTS

PROMOTE CHARACTER BUILDING PROGRAMS (RESPECT FOR OURSELVES, OTHERS, PROPERTY) TO COMBAT BULLYING, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DRUG USE

ENHANCE PARENT UNIVERSITY TRAINING PROGRAMS TO ALLOW MORE TOPICS AND INSTRUCTORS

RECOGNIZE THAT VIOLENCE IS A DISEASE. PROMOTE PREVENTION WORK WITHIN HEALTH SYSTEMS TO ENSURE TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE. PROMOTE VIOLENCE PREVENTION AS ONE OF THE PRIORITY WORK AREAS FOR THE KENT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT. ACTIVATING THE PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR CAN COMPLEMENT EXISTING EFFORTS.

### MODERATE TERM (1-2 YEARS)

SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH TO SUCCEED IN COLLEGE, WORK, AND LIFE AND CONNECT GRADE SCHOOL TO GRAD SCHOOL AND TO COLLEGE, THROUGH COLLEGE PROGRAMS

### LONG TERM (2-5 YEARS)

ADDRESS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AS A REAL ISSUE AMONG OUR TEENS AND FAMILIES (SENATE BILL 34)

DEVELOP PLANS FOR STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS "PRISON BOUND" TO MOVE OFF LIST

# E. (E1) ELIMINATE VIOLENT ACTS

## SAFE TASKFORCE PEACE RECOMMENDATIONS

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE MULTI-FACETED AND AIMED AT PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE.

### SHORT TERM (6-12 MONTHS)

SUPPORT THE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE/REINSTATEMENT TRAINING APPROACHES TO DISCIPLINE AND PROVIDE FOR INTERVENTIONS WHEN CHILDREN HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE AND TRAUMA

#### DEPLOY BODY CAMS

DEPLOY SHOT SPOTTER AND OTHER PRACTICAL MODERN TECHNOLOGIES IN A WAY THAT REASONABLY PROTECTS PRIVACY, BUILDS COMMUNITY-POLICE TRUST, INFORMS INVESTIGATIONS

USE ELEMENTS OF CEASEFIRE STRATEGY TO PUT THE COMMUNITY ON NOTICE THAT CRIME IS NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE. INCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TO STAND WITH LEADERS. CONVEY THIS MESSAGE AS OFTEN AS NEEDED.

### MODERATE TERM (1-2 YEARS)

DEVELOP A HYBRID VIOLENCE REDUCTION STRATEGY FOR SERIOUS OFFENDERS FROM THE FOLLOWING MODELS: SOUTH BEND, SAFE COMMUNITIES, CURE VIOLENCE, CEASE FIRE, AND STREET SOLDIERS AND IDENTIFY/IMPLEMENT ASPECTS FOR THE CITY WITHIN A FRAMEWORK THAT GUN VIOLENCE IS A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE.

# A. ACTIVATE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

## SAFE TASKFORCE PEACE RECOMMENDATIONS

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE MULTI-FACETED AND AIMED AT PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE.

### SHORT TERM (6-12 MONTHS)

IDENTIFY, TRAIN AND PLACE 15 - 24 YEAR OLDS  
IN YEAR ROUND CITY-RELATED EMPLOYMENT  
OPPORTUNITIES

SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT/WORKFORCE  
STRATEGIES FOR "AT RISK" INDIVIDUALS

BAN THE BOX - CITY IMPLEMENT FOR ALL  
INTERNAL CITY HIRING.

PROMOTE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMS AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

### MODERATE TERM (1-2 YEARS)

PARTNER WITH THE STATE OF MICHIGAN  
TO EXPAND THE "COMMUNITY VENTURES"  
INITIATIVE THAT PROMOTES EMPLOYMENT  
AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE TO GRAND RAPIDS

BAN THE BOX - CITY-WIDE ORDINANCE  
FOR GR EMPLOYERS

PROMOTE CITY-RELATED INCENTIVES FOR  
CONTRACTORS OF ALL TYPES WHO EMPLOY  
AND/OR OFFER APPRENTICE PROGRAMS TO  
STUDENTS 15-24 FROM COMMUNITY PROGRAMS.

REVIEW EDUCATIONAL RESTRICTIONS FOR  
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES FOR SPECIALTY  
PROGRAMS (E.G.POLICE ACADEMY DEGREE VS. CREDITS)

ALL CITY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND POLICIES  
ARE REVIEWED TO ENSURE REQUIREMENTS DO NOT  
CREATE DISPARATE IMPACT, AND HIRE WITHIN THE  
COMMUNITY

# C. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION & EMPOWERMENT

## SAFE TASKFORCE PEACE RECOMMENDATIONS

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE MULTI-FACETED AND AIMED AT PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE.

### SHORT TERM (6-12 MONTHS)

ADVOCATE AND PROMOTE MENTORING, RECREATIONAL AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS IN ALL NEIGHBORHOODS

SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT YOUTH RITES OF PASSAGE

DEVELOP WEBSITE/APP TO SHARE PROGRAMS, ORGANIZATIONS, EVENTS, ACTIVITIES FOR 15-24 YEAR OLDS. HIGHLIGHT POSITIVE YOUTH STORIES AND EDUCATE (STOP IT REPORT).

LAUNCH A CITY WIDE SAFE GR MEDIA CAMPAIGN TO INFORM THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THE SAFE STRATEGIES THAT ARE BEING LAUNCHED.

LAUNCH NEIGHBORHOOD PRIDE CAMPAIGN, ORGANIZED BY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

RACIAL EQUITY AND IMPLICIT BIAS TRAINING FOR ALL JUDICIAL WORKERS, PUBLIC SERVICE, NON-PROFITS THAT SERVE MINORITIES

### MODERATE TERM (1-2 YEARS)

ENSURE ALL NEIGHBORHOODS HAVE ACCESS TO A BALANCE OF QUALITY HOUSING CHOICES

RECOMMEND RACIAL EQUITY AND IMPLICIT BIAS TRAINING FOR ALL JUDICIAL WORKERS, PUBLIC SERVICE, NON-PROFITS THAT SERVE MINORITIES

REVIEW THE STATE'S "STAND YOUR GROUND" LAW TO UNDERSTAND THE LAW AND EDUCATE THE COMMUNITY OF THE FINDINGS.

INCREASED RECREATIONAL-RELATED ACTIVITIES THROUGH CITY IN PARKS AND NEIGHBORHOODS

# E. (E2) EFFECTIVE POSITIVE CHANGE IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS (LOCAL, COUNTY, STATE)

## SAFE TASKFORCE PEACE RECOMMENDATIONS

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE MULTI-FACETED AND AIMED AT PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE.

### SHORT TERM (6-12 MONTHS)

THE POLICE CHIEF SHALL REVIEW DISPARITIES WITH THE ARREST RATES OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE CITY TO ENSURE THAT EQUAL PROTECTION OF THE LAW IS AFFORDED TO ALL

REVIEW ALL GRPD POLICIES AND PRACTICES AS IT RELATES TO "NO TRESPASSING" LETTERS/NOTICES AND "PICTURES & PRINTS", ALONG WITH DATA FOR THESE ARRESTS. INCLUDE FINDINGS IN EDUCATIONAL PLANS FOR THE BROADER COMMUNITY

CREATE A RECRUITMENT PROGRAM BETWEEN GRPS AND OTHER SECURITY RELATED ORGANIZATIONS TO INFLUENCE DIVERSITY

ENSURE CITY PRACTICES PRIORITIZE YOUTH AND FINANCIALLY SUPPORT PREVENTION PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES

ALLOW 3 CITIZENS TO BE PART OF THE COMMISSION'S PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

### MODERATE TERM (1-2 YEARS)

ENHANCE TRAINING FOR ALL CITY LEADERSHIP AND ALL POLICE/FIRE STAFF (IMPLICIT BIAS, RACIAL EQUITY, POLICE LEGITIMACY, SOCIAL SYSTEMS, MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID) WHICH WILL FOSTER RELATIONSHIP BUILDING, RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES.

### LONG TERM (2-5 YEARS)

CONDUCT AN INDEPENDENT AUDIT OF POLICE PROTOCOLS TO UNDERSTAND WHERE WE CAN ESTABLISH COMMUNITY COURT SYSTEM FOR TICKET PAYMENT TO DECRIMINALIZE CERTAIN CRIMES

MAKE LAW ENFORCEMENT DATA TRANSPARENT (DISAGGREGATE BY RACE, AGE, GENDER TO DISCERN TRENDS, SUPPORT POLICING EQUITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND TRUST, AND MEASURE PROGRESS)

INCENTIVIZE GRPD, GR CITY EMPLOYEES TO LIVE IN THE CITY

SUPPORT SENSIBLE STATE EFFORTS TO REFORM POLICING, PAROLE, AND PROBATION POLICIES THAT KEEP PEOPLE LOCKED UP WAY BEYOND ANY RATIONAL CONCERN FOR PUBLIC SAFETY. ESTABLISH A CITY WIDE GOAL OF LOWERING INCARCERATION AND RECIDIVISM RATES. DETERMINE IF RULES ARE HARMING OR HELPING WITH EMPLOYMENT AND SCHOOL

REVIEW FOIA POLICIES TO SEE WHAT TYPES OF PRIVACIES FOR CITIZENS WHO WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN SOLVING CRIMES HAVE: EXEMPTION FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT RECORDS: SECTION B III

LOBBY FOR CHANGE IN THE FOIA LAWS TO PROTECT WITNESSES

PROMOTE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN POLICE AND PROBATION OFFICERS

DETERMINE A BETTER SYSTEM FOR THE PROBATION OFFICERS' INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENT VERIFICATION

RESEARCH AND RECOMMEND WELFARE REFORM THAT EMPOWERS AND EQUIPS, NOT PENALIZE

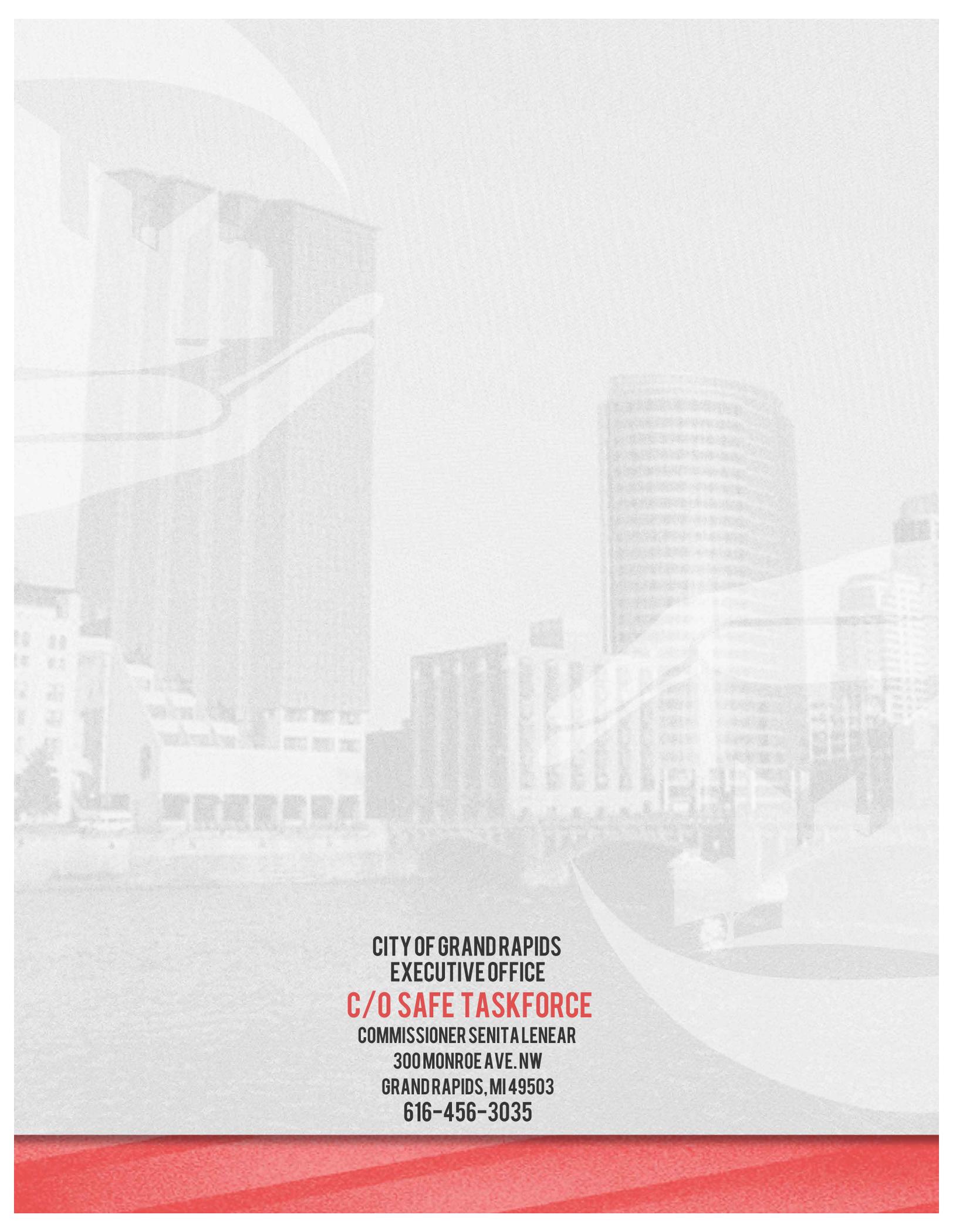
DISCOURAGE AND INTERRUPT GANG INITIATIONS IN SCHOOLS TO ENSURE ALL CHILDREN DO NOT FEEL THREATENED IN SCHOOLS. PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEADERSHIP WITHIN RESTORATIVE JUSTICE APPROACHES.

## CONCLUSION

In addition to the **development of a local contextual fit**, when promoting a violence reduction initiative for the City of Grand Rapids, we can look to some of the general areas of success and failure from different locales as an avenue to insure proper implementation. Thematically, there are five areas of consideration that have been associated with success and failure across the multitude of violence reduction initiatives implemented in the United States. First, the importance of a strong working group cannot be emphasized enough. Successful violence reduction initiatives while varying in focus resoundingly rely on strong partnerships across varying government and private organizations at the public, parochial and private levels. Second, programming that contained a mentoring component at the community level for high risk adolescents were found to be especially helpful in regard to gang initiated violence reduction. Third, violence reduction initiatives that identify risk factors and high risk individuals have been found to have broader benefits over the long run than city-wide programs. Fourth, transferability across jurisdictions and succession planning in regard to the developed working partnerships is imperative. Finally, the use of evidence based prevention methods such as directed patrol with on-going assessment and refinement (i.e. a consistent evaluative feedback loop) will promote long term violence reduction.



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